

a few days ago she wrote, "At the moment, just from my balcony, I can see people running with suitcases, and I can hear some gunshots. A village just a few hundred meters from my house is all surrounded. As long as I have electricity, I will continue writing to you. I'm trying to keep myself as calm as possible. My younger brother, who is 9, is sleeping now. I wish I will not have to stop his dreams."

We asked these people of Kosovo to accept peace, and they did. We promised them we would stick by them if they did the right thing, and they did. We cannot let them down now.

Americans have learned the hard way that our home is not that far from Europe. Through two World Wars and a long cold war we saw that it was a short step from a small brushfire to an inferno, especially in the tinderbox of the Balkans. The time to put out a fire is before it spreads and burns down the neighborhood. By acting now, we're taking a strong step toward a goal that has always been in our national inter-

est: a peaceful, united, democratic Europe. For America there is no greater calling than being a peacemaker. But sometimes you have to fight in order to end the fighting.

Let me end now by repeating how proud all Americans are of the men and women in uniform risking their lives to protect peace in the Balkans. Our prayers are with them. And our prayers are with all the people of the Balkans searching for the strength to put centuries of divisions to rest and to join Europe and North America in building a better future together.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:44 p.m. on March 26 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Rescue of a United States Pilot in Serbia *March 27, 1999*

I am pleased with the news that our pilot has been rescued successfully. I am tremendously proud of the skill and bravery of the pilot and of the courageous individuals who participated in the recovery.

As I have said from the outset, this military operation entails real risk. However, the continued brutality and repression of the Serb forces

further underscores the necessity for NATO forces to persevere.

Our NATO operations will go forward as planned. I strongly support the decision of Secretary General Solana to move to a new phase of the air campaign, which will include a wider range of targets, including forces in the field.

Statement on the Death of Michael Aris *March 27, 1999*

The First Lady and I were saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Michael Aris, a scholar of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies at Oxford University. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife, Aung San Suu Kyi, his sons, Alexander and Kim, and other family members.

Dr. Aris' perseverance and dedication to his wife and family and to the cause of human rights and democracy in Burma earned him the

respect and admiration of citizens around the world. At this difficult time, I want to reaffirm to Michael's family and to all the people of Burma that the United States will keep working for the day when all who have been separated and sent into exile by the denial of human rights in Burma are reunited with their families and when Burma is reunited with the family of freedom.